

**The Atlanta Campaign, Part 1**  
**Dalton, Resaca, and Cassville**  
*A BGES Civil War Field University Program*  
**with David (Dave) A. Powell**  
**April 24-27, 2025, from Ringgold, GA**

The Atlanta Campaign and the subsequent fall of Atlanta is arguably the most important campaign of the Civil War, as it galvanized Northern support and ensured President Abraham Lincoln's reelection in November 1864. Despite its significance, the campaign has often been overshadowed by others and has yet to receive the attention it truly deserves. While recent works over the past decade have begun to fill the void, no comprehensive study of the campaign has emerged since Albert Castel's *Decision in the West* in 1992. Dave Powell's "The Atlanta Campaign, Volume 1: Dalton to Cassville, May 1–19, 1864," the first in a proposed five-volume treatment, promises to fill that void.

While Grant and Lee slugged it out in Virginia, Sherman and Johnston parried and feinted like skilled fencers. Johnston avoided taking the offensive, hoping to instead draw Sherman into costly frontal assaults against fortified lines. Sherman, averse to the uncertainties of direct battle, preferred strategic maneuvers. Whenever Johnston dug in, Sherman sought to outflank him, driving Confederate forces from seemingly impregnable positions in what Civil War historian Richard M. McMurry famously called "the Red Clay Minuet."

Contrary to popular belief, Sherman did not set out to capture Atlanta. His orders were "to move against Johnston's army, to break it up, and to get into the interior of the enemy's country ... inflicting all the damage you can against their war resources." No Civil War army could survive long without a secure logistical base, and Atlanta was essential to the broader Confederate war effort. As Johnston's army retreated, Southern anxieties about the city's fate deepened. Meanwhile, Sherman's steady advance heightened Northern hopes for a decisive victory.

This first installment of Powell's "Atlanta Campaign" tour series covers the critical actions in and around Dalton, Ringgold, Resaca, Adairsville, and Cassville, as well as key locations in between, such as Snake Creek Gap. There, Maj. Gen. James B. McPherson's smaller Army of the Tennessee successfully outflanked Johnston's position at Dalton. The largest engagement, at Resaca, resulted in more than 8,000 killed, wounded, and missing in just two days. Between major battles, the armies skirmished daily what participants would later call the "100 days' fight."

Join Dave Powell in this excellent first volume as he guides you to scenes of the action and describes it in detail and with new analyses and depths that have never been covered before!

## **Itinerary**

### **Thursday, April 24, 2025**

Meet Dave at our headquarters hotel at 6:00 p.m. for a one-hour orientation program and an overview of the sights and events included in your tour. Program materials will be handed out (or the next morning for late arrivals).

### **Friday, April 25, 2025**

We will depart our hotel at 8:00 a.m. and begin our day at Ringgold Gap, home to the Works Progress Administration's (WPA) Atlanta Campaign Pocket Park #1 and the site of Maj. Gen. Patrick Cleburne's stand following the Confederate defeat at Missionary Ridge in November 1863. This stop also features a statue of Cleburne.

We will next visit the Stone Church before heading to Tunnel Hill and the Clisby Austin House, where General Sherman maintained his headquarters during the first week of the campaign.

From there, we will strike for the scenes of fighting around Dalton, including Mill Creek Gap Park (WPA Pocket Park #2), Rocky Face Ridge Park, Potato Hill Park, and Dug Gap Mountain Battlefield Park; we will stop for lunch at some point along the way. At these sites, Sherman made multiple probing attacks designed to divert General Johnston's attention from McPherson's flanking maneuver toward Resaca via Snake Creek Gap.

We will end the day at Dug Gap Mountain Battlefield Park, where Gen. John W. Geary and the Second Division of the XX Corps, Army of the Cumberland, launched the most desperate diversionary attack.

If there is time, we may visit Varnell, the scene of some of the campaign's earliest cavalry actions.

Lunch is included, but dinner is on your own.

### **Saturday, April 26, 2025**

Departing the hotel at 8:00 a.m., we will drive to Villanow, an important crossroads at the mouth of the Armuchee Valley and the staging area for McPherson's advance. From there, we will follow McPherson and his five-division army through Snake Creek Gap, pausing at a historical marker on Hall Memorial Road, the site of early action during the Battle of Resaca.

We will next visit the Resaca Battlefield Park and the Federal and Confederate positions across the Camp Creek Valley as we study the Battle of Resaca in earnest.

We will continue to WPA Pocket Park #3, the site of Van Den Corput's Battery, and visit Fort Wayne, Calhoun, and Lay's Ferry, as we wrap up our coverage of the Resaca campaign.

We will return to the hotel by 5 p.m. Lunch included, but dinner is on your own.

### **April 27, 2025**

Departing the hotel at 8:00 a.m., our final day begins in Adairsville, where Cheatham's Division of Tennesseans and some Southern cavalry fought a delaying action against Maj. Gen. O. O. Howard's IV Corps as they pursued the retreating Confederates.

We will then head to Cassville to learn about the failed Confederate attack and how Sherman's focus on Kingston thwarted the rebel plans before wrapping up our first in a series of tours on the Atlanta Campaign.

We will return to the hotel by 5:00 p.m. Lunch is included.

### **About the Faculty**

**David A. Powell** is a 1983 graduate of the Virginia Military Institute and the award-winning author of many books, including *The Chickamauga Campaign* trilogy. His newest undertaking is a five-volume study of the Atlanta Campaign, the first volume of which, *The Atlanta Campaign: Volume 1: Dalton to Cassville, May 1–19, 1864*, was released in summer 2024. Dave has also designed and provided technical and historical guidance for historic war games for multiple companies across numerous platforms. His keen eye for terrain coupled with his outstanding research skills and analysis provide for a unique, detailed, and nuanced perspective. Dave resides in Chicago with his wife, Anne.

### **Hotel Information**

This program will be headquartered at Hampton Inn Ringgold, 6875 Battlefield Parkway, Ringgold, GA, 30736; 706-935-4800. The BGES special hotel rate is \$119 plus tax, with a rate cut-off date of March 24, 2025. When you call the hotel, be sure to tell them that you are booking your room with the group "Blue and Gray Education" to get the special rate. The hotel does not have an airport shuttle.

### **Transportation**

The servicing airport is Chattanooga Metropolitan Airport (CHA), 12 miles from the hotel. Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport is also an option. It is 112 miles from the hotel.

### **Recommended Reading**

You will receive maps and materials that will meet your onsite requirements. The following books are suggested to enhance your readiness for the program.

Castel, Albert. *Decision in the West*. Lawrence, KS: Kansas University Press: 1992. ISBN: 978-0700605620.

Cox, Jacob D. (1882). [\*Atlanta. Campaigns of the Civil War, IX\*](#). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. Retrieved April 16, 2020. ISBN: 978-0877970804.

Jenkins, Robert D., Sr. *The Cassville Affairs: Johnston, Hood, and the Failed Confederate Strategy in the Atlanta Campaign, 19 May 1864*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2024. ISBN: 978-0881469318.

Powell, David A. *The Atlanta Campaign, Volume 1: Dalton to Cassville, May 1-19, 1864*. El Dorado Hills, CA: Savas Beatie, 2024. ISBN: 978-1611216950.

### **Registration**

Registration includes three lunches, all paid admissions, maps, the academic program, support of a historian and a tour director, and transportation by passenger bus or van. We will also provide snacks and bottled water.

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\_\_\_\_\_ Current BGES member \$825

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